



Vol. 14 No.1

# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Spring 2009

Greensburg, Indiana

**ON A SUNDAY MORNING, THE  
REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER,  
WHEN ASKED IF THOSE WHO  
ATTENDED HIS SERMON WERE  
SAVED FROM THE DEVIL, REV.  
BEECHER RESPONDED,  
“WHEN THE DEVIL SHOOTS IN-  
TO A FLOCK, HE’S BOUND TO  
HIT SOMEONE.”**

*THE DECATUR REPUBLICAN*

APRIL 1859

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**Who, or What, is a Hoosier?**  
George Granholt

1

**President's Letter**  
Tom Barker

2

**Annual Dinner and Program  
Reservations**

3

**Fifth Sundays 2009  
Sesquicentennial Edition  
150 years of Music**

4

**A Memorial**  
George Granholt

5

**Looking Backward  
at a Dedication**  
George Granholt

6

**Support Sought for  
Historical Projects**

7

### Who, or What, is a Hoosier?

This intriguing question, or perhaps it's really not all that intriguing, has been asked since 1826. Now, how did your editor come up with this particular date? I would expect many, if not most, Hoosiers would agree there were individuals living in Indiana many years before 1826. Well, this particular year is cited in Merriam-Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition, as the date the word, *Hoosier*, came into the language. Additionally, of course, there is a definition given: "...perhaps an alteration of an English dialect word, *hoozer*, [meaning] anything large of its kind or a native or resident of Indiana...." Well, "perhaps" this definition isn't very helpful unless those discussing the word, "hoosier," have the same "...anything large of its kind," in mind. We are left, then, with the second definition, "...a native or resident of Indiana."

Fortunately, much more information about who and what a Hoosier is may be found in the current issue of the Fall, 2008, issue of *Traces*, published by the Indiana Historical Society. Steve Haller, the Senior Director of Collections for the William Henry Smith Memorial Library, IHS, has an article entitled, *The Meanings of Hoosier-175 Years and Counting*.

Still, this article does not provide an incontrovertible definition of "Hoosier," nor does it recount the efforts of those who, over many years, have attempted to do so. As Haller says, "Although more than fifty Indiana-related references [of the word, *Hoosier*,] had appeared by [1840]...a comprehensive survey of the subsequent litany of positive, negative, humorous, and serious references is not the subject of this review." What, then, does the article provide?

Essentially, Haller offers the reader a particularly well-written and annotated bibliography which delineates the efforts of such notables as novelist Meredith Nicholson, historian R. Carlyle Buley, journalist and political reformer Jacob Piatt Dunn, Jr., and biographer Walter Hovinghurst to find, in Haller's words, "... this Holy Grail...the origin and meaning of Indiana's ubiquitous nickname, delving into the (original) sources of the word, its meanings, possible linguistic history, and humorous folklore speculations...." Dunn, in particular, is cited as providing in his, *The Word Hoosier* (1907), "... one of the most extensive studies of this [Hoosier] question...."

Setting aside the extravagant claim that searching for the origin and meaning of "Hoosier" is a quest for a "Holy Grail," this reviewer finds much to admire about Haller's essay. The reader will discover a mix of history, literature, folklore, and even linguistics in *The Meanings of Hoosier*. In his last paragraph, Haller chooses a quotation from Hovinghurst's *The Heartland* (1962) to give sufficient reason to consider the meaning of *Hoosier*: "Whatever its origin, the name of Hoosier has had a lasting appeal for Indiana people and has acquired a quite enviable aura. For more than a hundred years it has continued to mean friendliness, neighborliness, an idyllic contentment with Indiana landscape and life."

## President's Letter

I turned nine years old during the week Greensburg celebrated its Centennial in 1959. My family traveled from near Geneva to attend many of the events of that week such as the parade, the pageant at the fairgrounds, and the carnival of rides and booths downtown on the square. I remember that although I had an understanding of the significance of the event, I also remember thinking one hundred years seemed like an impossibly long time for Greensburg to have been around. After all, one hundred years reached way back to before the Civil War. I remember a lot of people let their beards grow. I remember Frances Farmer in the parade. She was the first movie star I saw in person. Oddly, what impressed me most at the time was the use of "wooden nickels" as currency among the participating businesses. I had a whole pocketful of wooden coins which I spent happily. When I had one coin left I decided not to spend it, but instead save it as a souvenir. I still have that wooden nickel. On its face is an illustration depicting the courthouse tower and the words, Face Value 5 Cents. On the reverse it says, Good in trade at any cooperative business or redeemable at face value at either bank in Greensburg through June 19, 1959, Greensburg Community Centennial. Fifty years have passed since our Centennial. Strangely, one hundred years does not seem as long a time as it did to me in 1959. So here we are preparing to celebrate our Sesquicentennial this coming June 13 through June 20th. The Historical Society is working with several committees to put together a celebration equal to that of fifty years ago. I wonder if there will be any wooden nickels.

This is the year the Historical Society resumes its Fifth-Sunday Musicals. The Greensburg Junior High Ensemble returns to the Presbyterian Church on March 29th. The Mossberg Strings return on May 31st. The Mossberg Strings is a family of very talented musicians. They are professional and they present a program you will not soon forget. Make a point of seeing this extraordinary family perform. The Fifth-Sunday season ends on November 29th with The Murrays performing and the program being dedicated to Franklin Corya and his love of classical music.

We continue to work on our website [www.decaturcountyhistory.org](http://www.decaturcountyhistory.org). The website is still under construction as this sort of thing takes time to get organized. In the years ahead this will be an important tool the Society will have to reach the membership and serve the community in matters pertaining to our heritage and history.

Remember that the Historical Society's Annual Dinner and Program will be Saturday, April 11th. We have an excellent program planned to accompany an excellent dinner to be provided by the ladies of the Presbyterian Church. See you there.

Tom Barker, President

Historical Society of Decatur County

## Have you paid your dues?

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Pay your dues for 2009

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues

**Everyone is Invited**

**What: Annual Dinner Meeting**

**When: Saturday April 11, 2009**

**Where: 1st Presbyterian Church**

**Dinner 6:00— served by the Presbyterian Women**

**Program 7:00—The Historical Society of Decatur County is pleased to present William Bartelt**

William E. Bartelt of Newburgh taught social studies at Evansville's Harrison High School from 1968 until 2005 where he also chaired the social studies department, and he has served as an adjunct instructor at the University of Southern Indiana since 1986. Holding degrees from Indiana State University and the University of Evansville, Bartelt is a published author with books and articles to his credit and numerous unpublished historical reports. Bartelt has served as a consultant research historian for the Colonel William Jones State Historic Site and as a seasonal park ranger with the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial and the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. He is currently president of the Vanderburgh County Historical Society and serves as historian and administrative board chair of Trinity United Methodist Church in Evansville. Bartelt is an active member of the U. S. Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission as well as several state planning groups for the Lincoln Bicentennial. He was contracted with the Indiana Historical Society for a book on the Indiana years of Abraham Lincoln published in 2008 titled "There I Grew Up.". He received the Society's Hoosier Historian award in 2003.

This event is sponsored by the Historical Society of Decatur County. Everyone is invited to attend and hear the author of the most recent book on Lincoln's life in Indiana, "*There I grew Up.*"

**Reservations must be received by April 4, 2009**

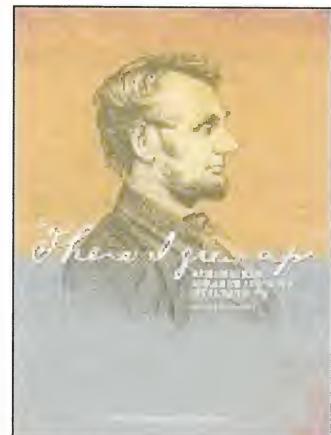
**Reservations for Annual Dinner and Program**

\$15 per person or \$25 per couple

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Dinners reserved \_\_\_\_\_ Checked enclosed and amount \_\_\_\_\_



**Reservation for program only**

\$5 for non-members— free to members

Name \_\_\_\_\_

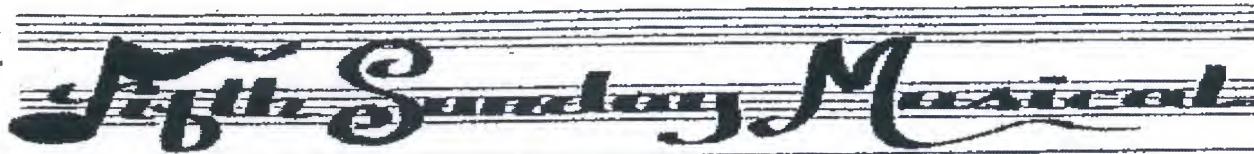
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending Program \_\_\_\_\_ Checked enclosed and amount \_\_\_\_\_

Send to Historical Society , P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240

## Historical Society of Decatur County

Requests the honor of your presence



2009

### The Sesquicentennial Edition 150 Years of Music

<b>Sunday, March 29th</b> <b>The First Fifty Years</b>  <b>The Next Hundred Years</b> First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana	<b>Clabber Girls Kitchen Band</b> Bonnie Chipman, Donna Fisher, Evelyn Kittle, Cleta Lamb and Karen Meister.  <b>Greensburg Junior High School Musical Ensemble</b> With Nick Parcell Featuring "Casey at the Bat" reading and music * See the <i>Vintage Ball Games at Arbor Grove Rebecca Park</i> <i>during the Sesquicentennial celebrations on June 20th.</i>	2:30 p.m.  Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each musical.
<b>Sunday, May 31st</b>  First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana	<b>Mossberg Strings</b>  Five children from the same family of 9 children; Caleb, 21; Aaron, 20; Rachael 19; Jacob, 17; Jared, 15. There are three other children who are also talented. They have been featured in the REMC Electric Consumer and are recipients of many local and state awards.	2:30 p.m.  Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each event.
<b>Sunday, August 30th</b>  First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana	<b>Carolyn Cleland, Harpist</b>  Carolyn discovered the harp in her childhood and has made it her vocation. She attended DePauw University and is a talented historical music harpist. People of her caliber are as hard to find as hen's teeth. Part of her program will be based on the "Harp of Brandiswhiere" by Sylvia Wood.	2:30 p.m.  Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each event.
<b>Sunday, November 30th</b>  First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana  The Murrays will add a little Christmas holly to begin the season.	<b>The Murrays, Mark and Michelle</b>  Mark Murray is a Professor of Music at Anderson University and holds a doctorate in trumpet performance from Indiana University. Along with other awards he currently plays principal with the Anderson Symphony Orchestra. Michelle Murray received her degree from Stetson University and obtained her master's degree in music theory from Indiana University. She currently is a professor at Anderson University. The concert is dedicated to the memory of Franklin Corya and his love and support of classical music.	2:30 p.m.  Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each event.

Gold Sponsor \$450.00 ( ) Silver Sponsor \$350.00 ( ) Bronze Sponsor \$250.00 ( ) Sponsor \$150.00 ( ) Co-Sponsor \$75.00  
( ) Patron \$50.00 ( ) Underwriter \$5.00 ( ) \$10.00 ( ) \$15.00 ( ) \$20.00 ( ) \$25.00 ( )

Make check payable to : Decatur County Historical Society

Mail to attention: "Fifth Sunday", P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## A MEMORIAL

In the school year of 1967-68, Mrs. Janet Fogg was instructing a group of nineteen freshmen boys in English and reading at Greensburg High School. Mrs. Fogg never recognized course "boundaries," nor did she pass up an opportunity to let her students feel personally involved with their education. During the school year, Mrs. Fogg's young students decided on a community history project, did the research, garnered support from the school and community, successfully completed the project, and published a booklet about their efforts. The cover of the booklet displays a quotation:

"We have further  
in the discharge of  
our duties, named  
the site chosen-  
**GREENSBURGH"**

Thomas Hendricks

Here is the Preface from that booklet:

*A group of freshmen, upon learning that the grave of Thomas Hendricks, the founder of Greensburg, was marked only by a broken and almost illegible monument, requested permission to raise the funds to purchase a monument to mark his grave and to commemorate the founding of Greensburg. This booklet is a result of their efforts to compile some interesting information about Thomas Hendricks, the founding of Greensburg, and interesting historical incidents from the community's past.*

### The Students Who Worked on the Project

Jim Brindley   Jim Brattain   David Bowling   Dan Dugle   Ralph Lozier  
Roy Swango   Freddie Shoopman   Mike McKee   Bert Bruns   Mike Krieger  
Steve Roberts   Jerry Kress   Don Elliott   Dale Thomas   Steve Hess  
Danny Narwold   Berlon Miller   Jim Parsons   Bob Thompson

*A copy of this booklet is in the Museum's collection. See Page 6 for Pictures*

## Looking Backward at a Dedication

One of the most incisive thinkers of recorded history, the Roman orator and statesman, Cicero, said, "History is the witness of the times, the light of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life, and the messenger of antiquity." At first glance we may feel that Cicero has assigned an onerous burden for Clio to carry, but if we look closer we may discover that history actually does fulfill each of the tasks that Cicero ascribes to it.

All of us are not only witnessing, but living, events which will have a significant effect on people's lives for many years to come. We are experiencing not only an exciting age, but one with much uncertainty. Charles Dickens penned a very convenient assessment of history in *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." The decisions and developments of these days will be only a retrospective in tomorrow's textbooks, offering a selection of vicarious experiences. However, we are actually living these experiences; they are not vicarious for us.

Your editor likes to think that Cicero had in mind an ancient version of the adage, "You can't see the forest for the trees," when he considered history to be "the light of truth." Often we are so close to a situation our prejudices obscure a clear view of the larger consequences of our thoughts and actions. History provides a context for memory, and perhaps a step backward will illuminate the present circumstances and future challenges we face today. History, having time on its side, has the capacity to indicate a better path, if we choose to take it.

A sense of history, then, can instruct us in living a productive life. If we are inclined to do so, we can profit in a number of ways from historical experience and approach the future with a renewed sense of hope. Patrick Henry said, in his "liberty or death" speech, "I have no way of judging the future but by the past...." Let us, then, know the past that we may better assess our future.

Cicero ends his characterization of history by calling it the "messenger of antiquity." History is the means by which we learn from those who lived out their lives in a time remote from ours. History provides the opportunity to observe, appreciate and, yes, even find fault with the accomplishments of those men and women who, though long gone, shaped our lives today. With these ideas in mind, this booklet is dedicated to those pioneers in our community who helped shape our lives today.

Requiescat in pace.



Left: Thomas Hendricks original grave marker as it is today.

Right: Thomas Hendricks marker placed as a result of a history project in 1967-68.

See page 5 for more details



## Support Sought for Historical Projects

Two projects of historical interest to Decatur County, one ongoing and one in the planning stage, need both your support and your direct involvement. The St. Mary's "Little Hoosiers" history club, sponsored by Mrs. Donna Stewart and assisted by Mrs. Sally Robbins, is currently involved in writing a history of each of the buildings on the square in downtown Greensburg. This ongoing project will not only enable the students to understand that buildings, like people, have interesting stories to tell, it will also encourage the young people to understand, practice, and be fascinated by basic research techniques. The "Little Hoosiers" will appreciate any stories, real or "presumptive," as well as pictures, that you have of these venerable structures. Just let Mrs. Stewart or Mrs. Robbins know what you have heard that will make an interesting story. You may also contact St. Mary's school or the Historical Society Museum. Here's your chance to not only help the youngsters, but be "published" as well.

The second project, now being planned, is a multi-faceted survey of Decatur County. Mr. Ben Morris, our local professional archaeologist, who oversaw the recent, and immensely popular, exhibit of American Indian artifacts at the Museum, is interested in doing a study of Decatur County which focuses on the geological, archaeological, and historical development of the county. Mr. Morris needs volunteers to help get this important project off the drawing board and into the active phase. Here's a chance for direct involvement by being among those who Mr. Morris can count on to provide both brain and brawn in an extremely significant activity. Besides Historical Society members, Mr. Morris intends to seek the help of government officials, land owners, and high school students to tell the story of Decatur County. The time is right and the leadership is ready to go. If you would like to help with the Archaeological Survey, please complete the following form and send it to the Historical Society of Decatur County. If you prefer, you may call the Historical Society Museum at 812-663-2764 or send an e-mail to [dechissoc@etczone.com](mailto:dechissoc@etczone.com). We wish to start training sessions as soon as possible.

Please reply by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

Thank you

---

### Historical Society of Decatur County, Archaeological Survey

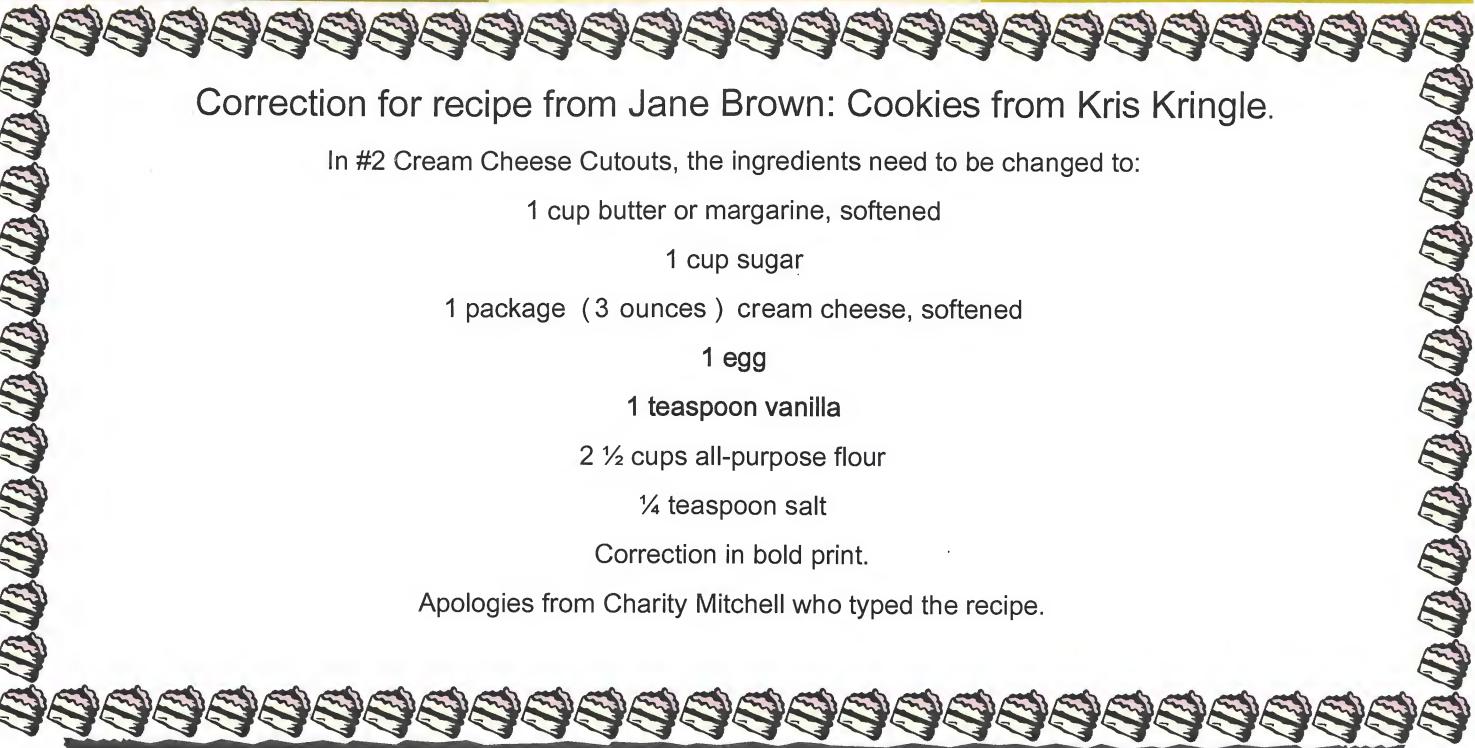
Box 163

Greensburg, IN. 47240

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_



## Correction for recipe from Jane Brown: Cookies from Kris Kringle.

In #2 Cream Cheese Cutouts, the ingredients need to be changed to:

1 cup butter or margarine, softened

1 cup sugar

1 package ( 3 ounces ) cream cheese, softened

1 egg

**1 teaspoon vanilla**

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour

¼ teaspoon salt

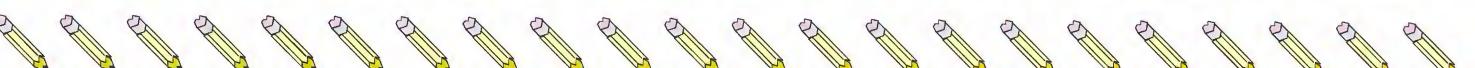
Correction in bold print.

Apologies from Charity Mitchell who typed the recipe.

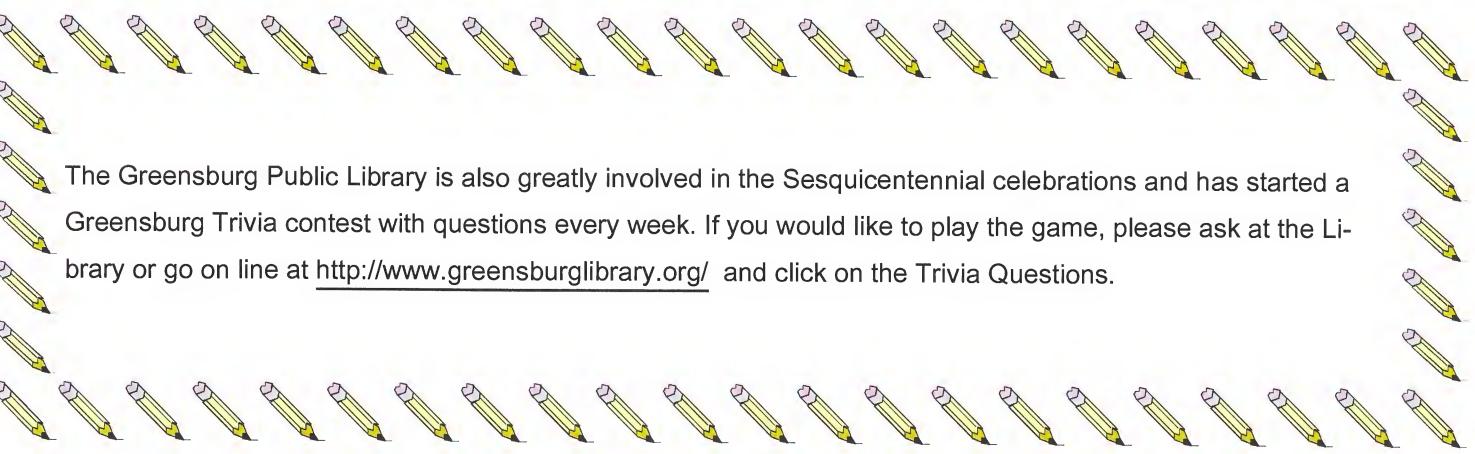


As you are all aware the Greensburg Sesquicentennial celebrations will be the week of July 13th to the 20th. There is a tentative schedule on the website at [www.greensburg150.com](http://www.greensburg150.com). Click on "Events" for a listing.

The Museum will be open this week from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. each day of that week and we will need extra volunteers. We are also doing walking tours of the Square and architectural tours of the city by horse and buggy. We need people willing to be tour guides. The Museum will provide some basic information for the tours. Please let us know if you can help by calling Ann Shazer at 663-2950 or the Museum office at 663-2764 and discussing what you would like to do.



The Greensburg Public Library is also greatly involved in the Sesquicentennial celebrations and has started a Greensburg Trivia contest with questions every week. If you would like to play the game, please ask at the Library or go on line at <http://www.greensburglibrary.org/> and click on the Trivia Questions.



## Coming Events for 2009

**Annual Dinner & Program: 6:00 p.m. April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Presbyterian Church (see page 3 for details and to make reservations. Don't miss this exciting program.)**

### House Exhibits

Wedding Exhibit (June - October)

Christmas (November - December)

### Gallery Exhibits for 2009

Greensburg History in Photographs, Artifacts, and Documents: Sesquicentennial Exhibit (April - June)

Lincoln in Greensburg and the Civil War in Decatur County (July - November)

### Textile Exhibit Room, 2009

Tip of the Hat (January - May) Hats at the Museum

Wedding Exhibit (June - October) (Museum's Collection)

## Financial Facts from 1959

Ford car: \$2,132-\$3,979

Milk: \$1.01

Gas: \$.25

Bread \$.20

Postage stamp: \$.04

Brook Trout: \$.59

T-Bone steak: \$1.09 lb.

Sirloin Tip Steaks: \$.89 lb.

Nestles Quick 1 lb can: \$.39

Tiny Tears doll: \$9.88

Steve Canyon Jet Helmet: \$2.88

Average annual wage in 1959 - \$4,000.00

Average Annual wage in 2009 - \$42,000.00

**Editor of the Bulletin**

George Granholt  
E-mail articles and ideas to  
Email: gholt2\_2@msn.com

**Decatur County Historian & Genealogist**

Russell Wilhoit  
1024 East Lakeshore Drive  
Greensburg, IN 47240  
Email: russell.wilhoit.1@comcast.net

**Tri-County Genealogist**

Irene Krieger  
23184 Pocket Road  
Batesville, IN 47006

“The Bulletin”

**Society's Officers**

President: Tom Barker  
Vice-President: Bryan Robbins  
Treasurer: Linda Volk  
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Bailey

**Board of Directors**

Roy Connor	Ginny Garvey
Lynda Smith	Mike McCoy
Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson
Polly Matlock	Tom Hunter

**Society's Agent**

William H. Robbins

**Museum Director**

Diana Springmier

**Historical Society of Decatur County Museum**

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December  
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764  
Email: dechissoc@etczone.net  
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Annual Dinner and Program  
Saturday April 11th  
See inside for details

Museum est. 1984  
Society est. 1957



PERMIT #80  
IN  
GREENSBURG,  
PAID  
U.S. POSTAGE  
STANDARD  
PRESORTED

Greensburg, IN 47240

P.O. Box 163

Historical Society of Decatur County



Vol. 14 No.2

# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Summer 2009

Greensburg, Indiana

### Thought for a Sesquicentennial Celebration:

*"We do not live to extenuate the miseries of the past nor to accept as incurable those of the present."*

—Fairfield Osburn

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

##### Celebrations

George Granholt

1

##### President's Letter

Tom Barker

2

##### Annual Dinner Article

3

##### Fifth Sundays 2009 Sesquicentennial Edition 150 years of Music

4

##### St. Maurice Article

Russell Wilhoit

5-7

##### Tids, Bits, and Snippets

George Granholt

8

##### Coming Events

9

### CELEBRATIONS

I first came to Greensburg in late summer of 1953. Since that date fifty-six years ago, I have spent all or some of my summers in Greensburg except for one—1959. Thanks to George Parks, the local Y director at the time, I spent that summer at Camp Tecumseh, the Indiana State Y.M.C.A. Camp on the Tippecanoe River north of Lafayette. After serving as Program Director from early June to the middle of August, I returned to Greensburg shortly before the start of my seventh year of teaching in the local school system. Of course I missed Greensburg's centennial celebration in the summer of 1959. However, I have had the good fortune of watching a video of the '59 festivities which were filmed by two of my first students, Fred Craig and James Childress. Fred is now retired after spending many years with Walt Disney Productions before forming his own film production company. Dr. James ( Jim) Childress is a marine biologist living in California. Jim has had a prestigious career in research and teaching.

Jim's and Fred's 16mm film of the 1959 Greensburg Centennial celebration has been professionally transferred to video cassette and DVD formats by Mr. Tom Barker, president of our Historical Society. These videos are available from the museum, and they make excellent programs for both personal and group viewing.

Greensburg citizens are now preparing their sesquicentennial celebration, and it promises to be every bit as commemorative as the one in 1959. Your editor has been checking out the preliminary schedule of events, and there is something planned for every age and every interest. The Greensburg Sesquicentennial is scheduled to begin Friday, June 12, with recognition of the Sesquicentennial Queen and Princess Pageant. Throughout the next eight days, the city's celebration will be characterized by an impressive and diverse array of attractions including two parades, two pageants, several music concerts, contests of many kinds, arts and crafts demonstrations, and even an "Old Time" baseball game. Recognition of our cultural and religious roots will be underscored, and an "Old Movie Marathon" will be offered at the Wolf Theater. Concessionaires and venders will be numerous, and there will be no lack of "good old Hoosier food. Venues across the city will be utilized, and the avid Sesquicentennial "fan" will be hard-pressed to keep up with all the activities and their locations. **Keep a schedule handy and do some planning!**

Yes, there will be much to participate in, to be attracted by, and to enjoy, but let's not forget that this celebration is more than a birthday party. We are honoring Greensburg's history as well as her age, and we hold every expectation that there will be an opportunity to do this again fifty years from now. Remember, "...history is an everlasting possession." — Thucydides, [471-401 B.C.]

## President's Letter

What a treat our Historical Society enjoyed on April 11th at the Annual Dinner. Our speaker was Mr. William Bartelt who gave an excellent lecture on the boyhood years of Abraham Lincoln when Lincoln lived in Indiana. His talk cleared up for me what had been a mystery all my life. What was this "milk sickness" that killed Lincoln's mother when Abe was still a boy? It turns out what killed Lincoln's mother was a poison called tremetol which got into the milk when the family cow ate a plant called white snakeroot. This was just one topic covered in Mr. Bartelt's talk. It was an excellent way to honor Lincoln's Bicentennial Birthday Year. I encourage you to read Mr. Bartelt's book, "There I Grew Up...Remembering Abraham Lincoln's Indiana Youth." Thank you, Bryan Robbins, Society Board Member and Vice-President, for arranging such an entertaining and informative evening.

Another event at the Annual Dinner was the special recognition given to Charity Mitchell for her tireless dedication to the Society's Museum. Thank you, Charity, for all your hard work and long hours documenting and archiving our county's history. Our Society and Museum are the envy of other counties and their historical societies. This is because of our volunteers who work to keep our programs and displays always fresh and new. The Museum is so blessed, in fact, that we have many more artifacts in storage than we have room to display them. The Museum currently rents two self-storage bins to handle our surplus artifacts. Presently, the Board is looking into acquiring a larger and better location for our storage needs. This is good news in that the Museum wants to be able to accept any and all items of historical importance to Decatur County. Our new Gallery and Archives are wonderful, but they were not designed to accommodate every item in our collection. I hope the Board's efforts to acquire these new storage facilities are successful.

See everyone at the Sesquicentennial!

Tom Barker, Society President

May 14, 2009

### Have you paid your dues?

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Pay your dues for 2009

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues

### HSDC Annual Meeting

The Historical Society's speaker for its annual meeting on April 11, 2009, was Mr. William Bartelt, a retired school teacher who taught high school social studies for thirty-seven years at Harrison High School in Evansville, Indiana. Mr. Bartelt served for fifteen summers as a ranger and historian at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City in southern Indiana. Mr. Bartelt also was an adjunct American history instructor at the University of Southern Indiana and is a past president of the Vanderburgh County Historical Society. He is currently a trustee of the Indiana Historical Society and has been awarded the Society's Hoosier Historian Award.

Mr. Bartelt is an accomplished raconteur in "all things Lincoln," and his choice as speaker for our annual meeting was especially significant since this is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Mr. Bartelt is currently serving as a member of the Federal Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's Advisory and Education Committees, is vice-chair of the Indiana Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, and is a board member of the Lincoln Boyhood Drama Association. The Indiana Historical Society has recently published his book, *"There I Grew Up: Remembering Abraham Lincoln's Indiana Youth."* Mr. Bartelt's presentation at our annual meeting was both scholarly and entertaining-a fortuitist combination.



Lincoln Farm (replica)



Memorial Building

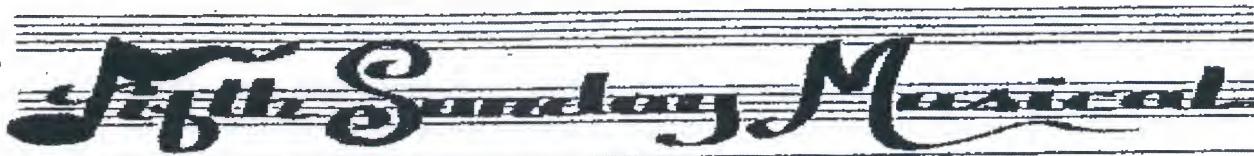
### In Memory

On a number of occasions the last few years, your Bulletin has printed articles of reminiscence by Mr. Nick Williams. Sadly, Nick died at his home just a few weeks before the publishing of this issue of the Bulletin. Nick was excited by the prospect of Greensburg's sesquicentennial, and he was preparing an article especially for this observance. Nick had a genuine appreciation for the work of the Historical Society, and he was always willing to write about those experiences in Greensburg and Decatur County which meant so much to him. This county is extraordinarily blessed with so many individuals who willingly give of their time and talents for others. Nick Williams has done his share, and more.

R.I.P.

## Historical Society of Decatur County

Requests the honor of your presence



2009

### The Sesquicentennial Edition 150 Years of Music

<b>Sunday, May 31st</b>	<b>Mossberg Strings</b>	<b>2:30 p.m.</b>
First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana	Five children from the same family of 9 children; Caleb, 21; Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each event. Aaron, 20; Rachael 19; Jacob, 17; Jared, 15. There are three other children who are also talented. They have been featured in the REMC Electric Consumer and are recipients of many local and state awards.	
<b>Sunday, August 30th</b>	<b>Carolyn Cleland, Harpist</b>	<b>2:30 p.m.</b>
First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana	Carolyn discovered the harp in her childhood and has made it her vocation. She attended DePauw University and is a talented historical music harpist. People of her caliber are as hard to find as hen's teeth. Part of her program will be based on the Harp of Brandiswhiere by Sylvia Wood.	Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each event.
<b>Sunday, November 30th</b>	<b>The Murrays, Mark and Michelle</b>	<b>2:30 p.m.</b>
First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana The Murrays will add a little Christmas holly to begin the season.	Mark Murray, is a Professor of Music at Anderson University and holds a doctorate in trumpet performance from Indiana. Along with other awards he currently plays principal with the Anderson Symphony Orchestra. Michelle Murray received her degree from Stetson University and obtained her master's degree in music theory from Indiana University. She currently is a professor at Anderson University. <b>The concert is dedicated to the memory of Franklin Corya and his love and support of classical music.</b>	Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each event.

See the Vintage Ball Games at Arbor Grove Rebecca Park during the Sesquicentennial celebrations on June 20th.

All performances will be followed by refreshments and an opportunity to meet the artists. For more information contact Helen Hamilton at 527-2740.

Gold Sponsor \$450.00 ( ) Silver Sponsor \$350.00 ( ) Bronze Sponsor \$250.00 ( ) Sponsor \$150.00 ( ) Co-Sponsor \$75.00  
( ) Patron \$50.00 ( ) Underwriter \$5.00 ( ) \$10.00 ( ) \$15.00 ( ) \$20.00 ( ) \$25.00 ( )

Make check payable to : Decatur County Historical Society

Mail to attention: "Fifth Sunday", P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## St. Maurice has future Abundance of First Class Limestone and natural gas in its vicinity —Capital needed to Develop its Resources

*This article was first printed on Oct. 9, 1913, in the Greensburg Standard, and it was edited and added to by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, May 5, 2009. This is the 12<sup>th</sup>, in a series of articles about the small towns located in Decatur County.*

St. Maurice, Oct. 9, 1913. — One mile north and seven miles east of Greensburg near the Franklin county line, is located in the old but small town of St. Maurice with a population of one hundred fifty.

It was laid off in 1869 by Jean Mary, and was named in honor of Bishop St. Maurice, at one time a French Bishop of this (Catholic) Diocese.

The little town is surrounded with well-to-do, practical farmers who own the acres of soil they till, and live in comfortable homes.

The town and surrounding community have an abundant supply of first-class limestone, and only await the introduction of capital to reveal its vast quantities and richness.

And, there is not doubt as to there being an abundance of natural gas in this section, as evidenced by the gushing well dug on the farm of Myron C. Jenkins, one and one half miles south of here, by the Standard Oil Company. Said well was "capped" by the said company and not allowed to flow, and it is confidentially whispered that Mr. Jenkins received somewhat of a "retainer" for keeping "mum" concerning this well.

The first house built upon the site of St. Maurice was a log one, erected before the town was laid out by a Mr. Modelson, in 1856.

The first residence built in the town after it was laid off was a frame built by Herman Schrader in 1859, and still stands and is being used as a barn by Frank Kramer.

Herman and Ferdena Schrader erected the first business house in the town in 1859, in which they conducted a general store. They sold the business to Herman Kessing, (died, Dec. 22, 1876\*) father of Ed Kessing, who operated the store for some years. Mr. Kessing also built a two story brick residence here — 50 x 50 feet square — in the town in 1863, in which he lived and died. His widow (Ed's mother) who resides in Greensburg, still owns and rents the building to Frank Kramer.

In 1859, Henry Hopster (died-June 17, 1892\*) came here from Cincinnati and engaged in the manufacture of leather shoes.

John Fesse, of Oldenburg, Henry Swegman, of Cincinnati, John Huser, of Enochsburg, together with twenty-two others, making a total of twenty-five people, came here in 1861, erected a small frame chapel and inaugurated an academy for boys, teaching German, English, French and Latin. Later on in the same year, the school having increased in numbers to such an extent they erected a new two story brick building and another frame building for a dormitory, and the schools prospered for a season. The brick still stands and is now the residence and business house of Matthew Moser, the merchant tailor, and the dormitory is also standing and used for a residence.

### St. Maurice Today

Frank Kramer is conducting a general store in a large brick business house, and carries

about everything the people need in the way of groceries, provisions, dry goods, shoes, hats, caps, etc., and enjoys a splendid trade.

An up-to-date merchant tailoring establishment is owned and operated by the veteran tailor, Matthew Moser, and his long years of experience in the business is an absolute guarantee of perfect satisfaction to all who leave their orders with him for anything in the clothing line. His patrons are many and all sound his praise.

William Walke (Died-4/17/1930\*)& Son, Albert, (died-5/11/1959\*) are the proprietors of a blacksmith shop that is equipped with modern machinery, and are doing a splendid general blacksmithing and repair business.

The harness and repair shop of the town is managed by Ben Kneuven, (died-Sept.-1938\*) and he is an expert at the business.

Herman Muckerhide (died- Dec.4,1948\* ) is a contractor and builder with years of experience, and knows how things should be done in his line.

The only saw mill in this section is run by Ben Moorman, who is not only an experienced hand at sawing but a good judge of timber.

The village blacksmith is George Muckerhide (died-June 18,1928\*) and he is prospering.

### Catholic Church

St. Maurice is the center of the Catholic portion of Fugit township, and be it said to their credit they have one of the largest and finest church buildings in the county.

The building is of brick, resting upon a solid foundation of stone, in length it is seventy-five feet, and in width thirty-five feet; from the foundation to the top of the cross measures 110 feet high; the roof is of slate; heated by furnace and lighted by carbon gas.

The contractor commenced work on the building in 1882 and completed it in just one year. It cost \$15,000 in addition to the vast amount of work donated by members by way of hauling, building material, such as stone, brick, lumber, lath, slate, cement, sand, etc.

The interior of the church is one of dazzling beauty and displays the work of expert artists. This week the work of frescoing the interior was completed at an actual cost of \$1,800.

The Rev. Father Michael Wagner has been in charge of the church for the past six years, and the parsonage, or home, that he occupies on an adjoining lot to the church, is a massive two story brick furnished throughout in modern style.

### The School

The school building is certainly a model one and up to date in every particular; is of brick, thirty by forty-five feet; one story; two rooms; large hallway running east and west through entire building; heated by steam; has basement under entire building is equipped with stage fifteen by thirty feet and especially fitted up for social gatherings, entertainments, etc.

### Instructors

Prof. Francis J. Baronowsky is the principal and teaches grades five, six, seven and eight. He is assisted by Miss Julia Riordan who has charge of grades one, two, three, and four.

There are twenty-six pupils in grades one, two, three and four, making a total of fifty-one pupils in attendance.

Prof. Baronowsky teaches agriculture in grades seven and eight and music in grades five, six,

seven and eight, in addition to the other studies.

Miss Riordan teaches domestic science to grades seven and eight and music to grades one, two, three and four.

Prof. Baronowsky and his assistant, Miss Riordan, are numbered among our very best qualified instructors, and the success of the schools of St. Maurice is high evidence of their qualifications as educators.

Editors note- buried in St. Maurice Catholic Cemetery

Next issue we will journey over to Jackson twp and visit the little town of Alert which was laid out as a town in August of 1886, so I will see you next time.

*Russell*

### Archaeological Survey

Mr. Ben Morris has the archaeological survey of Decatur County underway, but **more volunteers are needed**. If you enjoy walking through fields of clover, or fields of other assorted flora, give the Museum a call at (812) 663-2764, or call Mr. Morris at (812) 527-2775. This is an opportunity to assist in a valuable service project and learn a good deal about the science of archaeology as well. High school and college-age students are also welcome. Native American artifacts abound in Decatur County, so please help find them and catalogue them.

### Tids, Bits and Snippets

As the result of a recent survey of Decatur County citizens, all five of those who responded indicated a desire for the Bulletin to offer some tasty morsels from "Bulletins Past." Bowing to such overwhelming public opinion, recognizing that pearls of wisdom resist tarnish, and assuming space permits, your editor will include items gleaned from "gently used" issues of *The Bulletin*. Here's your first taste.

Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>, 1970: Be an early bird! Save postage by paying your membership fee at the dinner meeting. Annual dues are still one dollar!

June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1960: Please note that the School Administration Building is located at 504 E. Central Avenue, across from and north of the new high school. As you enter the door, turn left into the auditorium (sic). Bring as many guests as you like. Everybody is welcome.

July, 1983 (citing an advertisement in the August 21, 1885, issue of the *Greensburg Standard*): "Wonders will never cease. Those \$3, \$4, and \$5 suits sold by the Cincinnati Clothing Factory on the southeast corner of the Square are a marvel of cheapness and will wear well equal to a great many \$10 suits."

### Thanks to Clarence and Brian Heaton

Thanks are due to Brian and Clarence Heaton for the six large photographs of early Greensburg sites. Brian "rescued" the pictures from the former Greensburg city hall on south Broadway. The pictures were about to be discarded when Brian recognized their historical value, and Clarence restored the frames. Brian and Clarence are two of the many Greensburg citizens who respect the value of historical artifacts. The many visitors to the Museum will now have the opportunity to see an additional six interesting sites in Greensburg presented in a professional manner.

### Property Abstracts

The Historical Society would appreciate the LOAN of your property abstract for the purpose of compiling a social history of Decatur County. The abstract will be kept only for a short time, and only for the recording of dates, owners, and history of the property. Any abstract you might be willing to donate to the museum will be archived as a historically significant artifact.

### Museum Outreach Programs

In April of this year, volunteers Charity Mitchell and Lois Carol McCormack conducted a program about the Museum for all second-grade students at the Greensburg Elementary School. According to Charity and Lois Carol, the over 200 students conducted themselves very well, asked good questions, and expressed genuine interest in coming to the Museum to see for themselves what we have. Our thanks go to the teachers: Jenny Gindling, Harriet Klene, Debbie Moorman, Donna Moorman, Jane Taylor, Holly Wehr, Kendra Westerfeld, and Lisa Wilson, who prepared the students extremely well, and to the administrative staff for their hospitality. Let's keep sowing "history seeds."

Through arrangements made by Carrie Shumaker, a staff councilor for Decatur Developmental Industries and a Museum volunteer as well, Charity and Lois Carol also presented a program on site for the employees of D.D.I. This outreach program again prompted an enthusiastic reception, and Charity and Lois Carol were encouraged to "...come back anytime." The Historical Society and the Museum exist for all Decatur County citizens. As our outreach increases, our justification for being increases as well. We are making progress with the past!

### Coming Events for 2009

#### Gallery Exhibits for 2009

Greensburg History in Photographs, Artifacts, and Documents: Sesquicentennial Exhibit. January-June, 2009

Lincoln in Greensburg and the Civil War in Decatur County July-November, 2009

#### Textile Exhibit Room, 2009

Tip of the Hat (January-May) Hats at the Museum

Wedding Exhibit (June-October) (Museum's Collection)

#### Fifth Sunday - May 31- Mossberg Strings

First Presbyterian Church 202 North Franklin Street Greensburg, Indiana, at 2:30 p.m.

Five children from the same family of 9 children; Caleb, 21; Aaron, 20; Rachael 19; Jacob, 17; Jared, 15. There are three other children who are also talented. They have been featured in the REMC Electric Consumer and are recipients of many local and state awards.

Admission is free to the community with an appreciation collection taken at each event.

### Tower Tree City Buggy Company

The Museum is in possession of a photograph of what appears to be a "cart" with a plate on it which reads, Tower Tree City Buggy Company, Greensburg, Indiana. There is no date visible, and efforts to ascertain the existence of such a company have so far been unsuccessful. If you have any information regarding such a business, please notify the museum, and a follow-up will be made.



**Editor of the Bulletin**

George Granholt  
E-mail articles and ideas to  
Email: ghoit2\_2@msn.com

**Decatur County Historian & Genealogist**

Russell Wilhoit  
1024 East Lakeshore Drive  
Greensburg, IN 47240  
Email: russell.wilhoit.1@comcast.net

**Tri-County Genealogist**

Irene Krieger  
23184 Pocket Road  
Batesville, IN 47006

“The Bulletin”

**Society's Officers**

President: Tom Barker  
Vice-President: Bryan Robbins  
Treasurer: Linda Volk  
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Bailey

**Board of Directors**

Roy Connor	Ginny Garvey
Lynda Smith	Mike McCoy
Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson
Polly Matlock	Tom Hunter

**Society's Agent**

William H. Robbins

**Museum Director**

Diana Springmier

**Historical Society of Decatur County Museum**

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December

Museum phone/fax: 663-2764  
Email: dechissoc@etczone.net  
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Annual Dinner and Program  
Saturday April 11th  
See inside for details

Museum est. 1984  
Society est. 1957



Greensburg, IN 47240

P.O. Box 163

Historical Society of Decatur County



Vol. 15 No.3

# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Fall 2009

Greensburg, Indiana

### Epigraph

*From the October, 1972, Bulletin:*  
"...for we know that when a nation goes down and never comes back, when a society or a civilization perishes, one condition can always be found. They forgot from whence they came. They lost sight of what brought them along."

Carl Sandburg

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>A Lament...and a Prophecy</b>	1
<b>President's Letter</b>	2
<b>Two Marvels and a Testimony</b>	3-4
<b>Fifth Sundays 2009 Sesquicentennial Edition 150 years of Music</b>	5
<b>Historical Society News</b>	6
<b>Berry's Trace</b>	7
<b>Museum Musings</b>	8
<b>Tids, Bits, and Pieces</b>	9

### A Lament...and a Prophecy

*The following unsigned editorial appeared in the Greensburg Daily News on August 8, 1978:*

Departure last week of the Indiana Railway Museum from the local scene caused no undue fanfare, and it probably will not be missed by many. The ambitious project, first undertaken some 17 years ago by an energetic group of dedicated railroad buffs, had great potential as a tourist attraction, but it was never realized.

This was due partly to inadequate promotion in nearby communities from whence persons interested in seeing and taking a ride on vintage railroad equipment could have come. There was also a notable lack of community support and, since it was a non-profit venture, not many persons were willing to volunteer their services to the operation.

A notable exception was Alan Barnett, son of the late Greensburg mayor George E. Barnett and a former local police officer, who as president and general manager of the railway museum has donated countless hours to the project since its inception. Barnett was instrumental in relocating the steam-powered locomotive and 20 passenger and freight cars from [their] former home at Westport to the north end of Greensburg in 1973.

Likewise, it is no coincidence that the Indiana Railway Museum will now offer excursion rides from an old passenger station at French Lick owned by the Sheraton Hotel chain. Barnett accepted a position as chief of security at the French Lick Sheraton resort hotel this past spring. It seems reasonable to assume Barnett's employers will make the most of the opportunity to develop the railway museum into a topflight tourist attraction.

The profit motive and infusion of private capital [are] what will make it a success. That is what was needed here but was not forthcoming—unfortunately. Since the museum is now gone from the local community, we wish Barnett and the firm promoting the museum every success. We will at least be able to say the Indiana Railway Museum got its start in Decatur County.

Perhaps the next time such an opportunity for attracting tourist dollars here presents itself, the community will get behind it and capitalize on it. Greensburg needs something more than just the Tree on the Tower.

## President's Letter

I always wondered what kind of tree it was that grew on the courthouse tower. It was only as recently as twenty years ago that I was informed that the tree was a large-tooth aspen. Imagine that. An aspen tree growing right here in Indiana on our courthouse tower. How did an aspen seed get up there? I imagined that little aspen seed wafting through the air on currents of wind, perhaps all the way from the Colorado Rockies. How fortunate for that little seed that it landed on our courthouse. Even if it were lucky enough to find another courthouse that had adequate nutrients in its structure, how many other communities would have tolerated a tree growing out of its courthouse? If you believe in destiny, this would be the perfect example.

But now they tell me that the tree is not a large-tooth aspen. It is a mulberry tree. I was informed that no less an authority than Purdue University determined our world-famous landmark to be an everyday, Indiana variety, mulberry tree. What a let-down. The 8th Wonder of the World is a common mulberry tree? Now, I like mulberry trees. I have several in my yard. And since learning of the species of our famous tree, I am proud to say that I have noticed recently that the mulberry tree by my back door looks very similar to the tree on the courthouse. They both have that same gnarled look.

But recently I read in the newspaper an article about the annual trimming of our famous landmark and I read that the tree is a large-tooth aspen. I was shocked. Had I been misinformed about Purdue and mulberry trees? Is the tree a large-tooth aspen or a mulberry? Does anybody really know? I am taking it as my challenge to determine, once and for all, the species of our historic landmark. Not that it matters. Whether it's an aspen or a mulberry, it is still the same symbol of a community that cares about its past, present, and future. That's why that seed, aspen or mulberry, was so very fortunate 130 years ago in choosing our courthouse as its home.

Tom Barker,

President

### Membership Form

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues.

Check your address label to see if you have paid for this year. Memberships make great gifts. We are looking for new members.

## Two Marvels and a Testimony

Situated in the southwest corner of Indiana in Orange County are two small communities, both of which you probably have heard about and, perhaps, even visited a few times. Yes, French Lick is Larry Bird's small home town and, to mix sports references, is only a (very) long home run from the even smaller community of West Baden. These locales are, however, favored with two of the most ornately imposing resort hotels in the United States: the French Lick Resort Hotel and Casino and the West Baden Springs Hotel. If you have not seen these structures in the last five years or so, or have never done so, I urge you to make the two-hour drive there...and prepare to be amazed! As you perhaps know, each hotel has undergone a complete restoration, thanks primarily to the efforts and financial backing of Mr. Bill Cook of Bloomington. Of course both structures have been on the National Registry of Historic Places for a number of years, but this only saved the hotels from demolition. There was no financial provision for even a modest restoration-let alone the return of the hotels to their original magnificence.

Each hotel has a storied past of over a hundred years. Begun as "watering places" where guests, some traveling for hundreds of miles, came to 'take the cure,' the facilities prospered into the 1930's. Sadly, the Great Depression ended the lavish lifestyle and its attendant disposable income necessary to keep the hotels profitable. The French Lick enterprise stayed open as part of the Sheraton chain for a number of years, but it was not able to regain the popularity it enjoyed in the years from the 1890's through the 1920's.

In its heyday the West Baden Springs Hotel, along with the customary tourist lodgings, also comprised an opera house, a casino, and a two-deck bicycle and pony track. A separate structure provided pool and billiard tables, and there were also a bowling alley, two golf courses, a theater, and a swimming pool. Of course the entire complex was landscaped with a number of formal gardens. There was also a baseball diamond on the site which was used by a number of major league baseball teams as a spring-training facility. Still, the most striking feature of the hotel was its domed atrium where birds flew freely under the two-hundred foot high ceiling. Efforts to keep the West Baden Springs Hotel in some kind of repair resulted first in the structure's ownership by the Jesuits who purchased the complex for one dollar in 1934 for use as a seminary. Declining enrollment, however, forced the Jesuits to sell the property, and it was acquired by Northwood Institute for use as a business school. This venture failed as well, and with no one taking responsibility for its upkeep, the hotel and its grounds suffered considerable deterioration until Mr. Cook came to the rescue of both the French Lick and West Baden hotels in 2006.

Now, if I've piqued your interest in taking a one-day tour or a weekend excursion to French Lick and West Baden to experience the above mentioned architectural marvels, I wish to note one other attraction situated between them. I'm referring, of course, to the Indiana Railway Museum, which has been located in French Lick since 1978. However, this facility did not have its beginning in French Lick, but in Westport, Indiana, in 1961. A group of Decatur County citizens, under the leadership of Mr. Don Montgomery, formed a corporation whose purpose was "...to [acquire], restore, preserve, display, and operate" historical railroad equipment. Three thousand feet of track which ran through Westport were purchased from the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad Company, and work began on a facility which the founders hoped would become a significant tourist attraction in Southeastern Indiana. Through the dedication of the corporation members, the hard work of many volunteers, and the successful efforts at fund-raising, the ambitious project made significant progress in the years from 1961-1972. However, the Penn Central Railroad successfully sought permission from the federal government to eliminate some eleven miles of track which allowed access to the Museum's facilities, and thus the Westport location had to be abandoned.

(Continued from page 3)

Fortunately, a second site for the Museum became available at the north edge of Greensburg just east of the Kova warehouses, and the Board of Directors, under the leadership of Mr. Alan Barnett, relocated the operation to this site. Round trip excursions to Sandusky became a feature of the Museum and, again, the *Greensburg Daily News* was able to publish an editorial with the heading, "Rail Museum Can Serve to Attract Tourists" (Jan. 10, 1974). Citing its proximity to I-74, and an "indicated fuel shortage," the *Daily News* noted that "...motorists will tend to drive on shorter trips. This should add impetus to a railway excursion on the facilities here" (*Greensburg Daily News*, 1/10/74). Once again the Museum, through the dedication of its leadership and its cadre of devoted volunteers, was poised to bring significant tourism to Greensburg and Decatur County.

Unfortunately, however, financial reality reared its ugly head again. As before, the Penn Central Railroad made a business decision to sell the tracks used by the Museum for scrap, and a decision had to be made to either dissolve the operation or find a new home for it.

Fortunately, Barnett, now General Manager of the Indiana Railway Museum, came to the rescue again. He was able to secure a site for the Museum at French Lick on property owned by the French Lick, West Baden, and Southern Railroad in 1978. Ironically this was the railroad system which, 75 years earlier, had transported thousands of visitors to the two grand hotels. Now, Alan is still actively involved in an enterprise which augments the hotels as a historically significant tourist attraction.. If you decide to take a trip to French Lick and West Baden, count on taking time to enjoy the two-hour excursion on "Alan's train." He'll want to welcome you and talk about old times.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

It would be difficult, indeed, to overestimate the transcendent importance of the part the railroad has played in making the Nation what it is today. Perhaps it would be within bounds to say that without railroads to bind the states into one homogeneous whole, the Nation never could have attained its present size and importance.

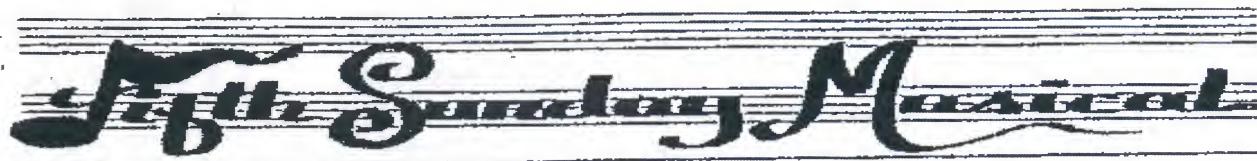
-Charles Frederick Carter

There will be a presentation at the Greensburg/Decatur County Public Library on the Native American artifacts found during the construction process for the REX pipeline. It will be held on Thursday September 17th at 7:00 p.m.

Former Greensburg resident, Bill Klene has spent several years gathering material on railroads and trains in Greensburg and Decatur County. He has compiled a very entertaining and historically relevant video lasting approximately 30 minutes. He will be showing it at the Greensburg/Decatur County Public Library on Monday, October 26th at 7:00 p.m. in the large meeting room. Watch for more information and mark your calendar.

## Historical Society of Decatur County

Requests the honor of your presence



2009

The Sesquicentennial Edition  
150 Years of Music

Sunday, November 30th	The Murrays, Mark and Michelle	2:30 p.m.
-----------------------	--------------------------------	-----------

First Presbyterian Church  
202 North Franklin Street  
Greensburg, Indiana  
The Murrays will add a little  
Christmas holly to begin the  
season.

Mark Murray, is a Professor of Music at Anderson University. Admission is free to the community with an appreciation. Along with other awards he currently plays principal with the Anderson Symphony Orchestra. Michelle Murray received her degree from Stetson University and obtained her master's degree in music theory from Indiana University. She currently is a professor at Anderson University.

**The concert is dedicated to the memory of  
Franklin Corya and his love and support of clas-  
sical music.**

All performances will be followed by refreshments by Jane Brown and an opportunity to meet the artists. For more information contact Helen Hamilton at 527-2740.

Platinum Sponsors: Greensburg Daily News

Gold Sponsors: First Federal Savings and Loan, WTRE AM 1330

Bronze Sponsors: David and Mary Miers

Sponsors: John and Adele Corya

Co-Sponsors: Levensteins/ Abbey Carpet

Patrons: Tom and Ann Shazer, Diana Springmier, June Ann Cook

Underwriters: Optimist Club of Greensburg, Doerflinger Insurance, Lion's Club



## Help Wanted!

The Museum solicits your help in acquiring, or accepting on loan, the following items:

All Barbie Dolls and accessories (Ken included) for a display planned for the observance of Barbie's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This display will be set up by December 1<sup>st</sup> and remain at least through the Christmas season. Call Helen Hamilton at 527-2740.

Any items of the Civil War era. These are especially valuable for display when school children come to visit. Call the office at 663-2764 to give or loan items for the exhibit.

## Big News!

Through the efforts of Charity and Board members, Jim Rosenberry and Roy Connor, we now have a large room at the Greensburg City Hall for additional storage space. Our appreciation is extended to Charity, Jim, members of the Greensburg City Council, and Mayor Gary Herbert.

## Big Thanks!

To the Stapp family for the use of the tractors and wagons for the Sesquicentennial on such short notice. It meant a lot to the Society to be able to carry out a commitment which, for a short time, was in doubt.

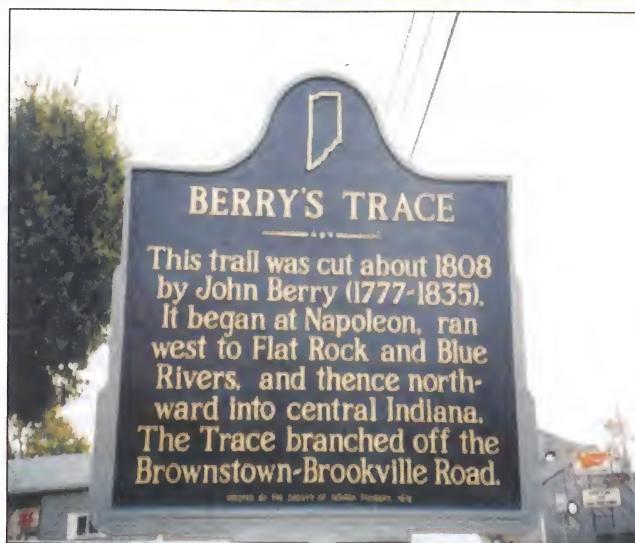
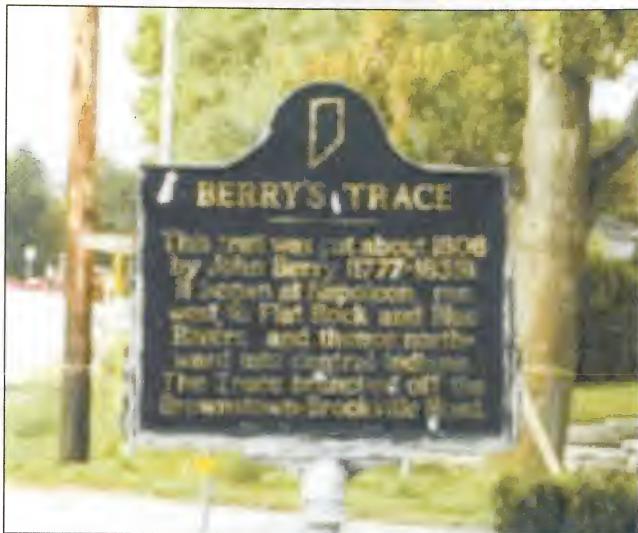
To all of the Historical Society members who devoted countless hours to meet the challenges given to us by our Board of Directors. Super job, everyone! Now...for 2059???

To our interns, Rebecca Bacon, Laura Neuman, and Cory Parks for their help in so many ways. They were here to learn, but they have also done some teaching of their own. Thanks to Susan Ricke and Charity Mitchell for their mentoring. Proper guidance pays big dividends.

To Russell Wilhoit, not only for his cemetery tours, but also for his work on the activities at Rebekah Park.

To the hundreds of volunteers from the entire community who gave so much of their time and talent to make every aspect of the Sesquicentennial an event to be favorably remembered.





Berry's Trace (from the July 8, 1972 edition of *The Bulletin*)

*Berry's Trace*

This trail was cut about 1808  
by John Berry (1777-1835). It began  
at Napoleon, ran west to Flat Rock  
and Blue Rivers, and thence northward  
into Central Indiana. The Trace branched  
off the Brownstown-Brookville Road.

*Erected by the Society of  
Indiana Pioneers, 1972*

This marker, located across from the Napoleon Feed Mill on U.S. 421, was dedicated Sunday afternoon, May 21<sup>st</sup>, by the Indiana Society of Pioneers. The Trace was actually a trail which is now part of the Milhouse Road northwest from Napoleon to Letts and on to Edinburg. Mrs. Floyd Miller of Napoleon and Mrs. Wayne Einhaus of Osgood spent a year researching records to prove the exact location where John Berry started blazing this trail in southern Indiana. Here is further evidence that all early roads led to or from Napoleon, as George Carey Eggleston once said.

The Ripley County Historical Society furnished the supplies and Phil Abrams, leader of Boy Scout Troop 638, Napoleon, enthusiastically agreed to repaint the marker which had been installed in 1972 by the Society of Indiana Pioneers. This is a great way to teach his young scouts to take pride in their community and heritage. . . and they learned the story behind the marker. The Scout Troop has volunteered to monitor the marker in the future to assure that the marker and the site are well maintained.

## No Christmas Ornaments this Year

Since 1993 the Historical Society's Christmas ornaments which depict familiar Greensburg and Decatur County sites have been sold in our Museum gift shop. These popular items, purchased by both local and out of Decatur County residents as mementos, have been available as annual issues.

However, due to the large quantities of the undated green Decatur County Courthouse ornaments on hand, the Historical Society's Board of Directors has decided to forego ordering a new ornament for 2009. Available past-dated ornaments may still be purchased, some at a reduced price, from the gift shop. The undated Decatur County Courthouse ornament will continue to be a welcome addition to the family Christmas tree, as well as a thoughtful gift for other occasions.

## Museum Musings

By Diana Springmier

In mid-June, the Museum was caught up in the whirlwind of celebrating Greensburg's Sesquicentennial. Our week opened with the help of James Stapp of Circle S Ranch who provided transportation for those who wished to tour neighborhoods north of the city square where numerous architecturally historical homes are located. The tours, conducted by Museum volunteers, were well-attended by local families who took advantage of a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon.

Craft Day saw each of the Museum's three porches with artisans demonstrating their talents. On one side of the welcoming front porch were four quilters in period costumes working at their quilting frames. Others were show-casing embroidery, tatting, knitting, cross-stitching, and rug hooking. The south porch's visitors could sample freshly-churned butter, acquire a Sesquicentennial calligraphy bookmark and view egg painting. Flint knapping and wood working were respectively demonstrated on the north porch by Greg Meyer and Bill Buening.

On Children's Day, selected small artifacts housed in the Museum were taken to the courthouse gazebo to be displayed and identified by youngsters who brought their own family's strange pieces to be given a name. Charity Mitchell, Lois Carol McCormack, and Cory Parks aided the children in learning the origin of the items used in days gone by. Later in the day, children of all ages were photographed in period costumes on the north lawn of the Museum. Changing to the apparel caused a flurry of confusion as the volunteers tried to keep reign on the enthusiastic youngsters and oldsters alike.

The Sesquicentennial week saw a counted number of 565 visitors to the Museum, many of whom had the expressed intent of seeing the exhibit of early Greensburg history displayed in the upstairs gallery. Charity and Lois Carol did much of the assembling of this exhibit.

Two college students have been involved both behind the scenes and interacting with our many Museum visitors. The two summer interns, Rebecca Bacon, an Indiana State University senior majoring in marketing, and Laura Neumann, a Marian University language arts major, worked diligently cataloguing the Museum's collections. Rebecca put together the Sesquicentennial brochure for the Museum, and Laura conducted tours. These two young ladies, along with GCHS graduate Cory Parks, who will be attending Rose-Hulman in the fall, were also involved in a much-anticipated major project. This project involved helping move many of the Museum's artifacts out of leased storage space to a much more accessible and spacious area at Greensburg City Hall. The interns also reorganized the upstairs textile storage room after the moving venture. How valuable the future generation of historians have become to the Museum staff and the Historical Society.

By the Fourth of July annual "After-Parade Open House," Ginny Garvey and Helen Hamilton had on display in the downstairs parlors forty valued wedding gowns on loan from the community. The Open House provided the "brides" in attendance with the opportunity to share stories about their children and grandchildren. Over the years this project has become one of the Museum's most popular.

In the upstairs textile room's bridal collection, the visitor will encounter a small world of additional 1910's-1960's bridal, bridesmaid, and mother-of-the-bride gowns, and featuring a beautiful bride under a garden arbor. Nita McCoy and Susan Ricke arranged this attractive display with the help from our two interns.

The highlight of the 2009 Bridal Exhibit was the July 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday afternoon wedding reception attended by the brides, their families, and community guests. Carol Pumphrey tastefully designed the dining room mantle and table flowers, and Jane Brown baked the beautiful and delicious wedding cake.

The 2009 Bridal Exhibit will be shown until the end of October. To arrange for group tours, call 812-663-2764. The Museum is open to the public on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 10:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M., and Sunday from 1:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M.

Do find time to bring family and friends and step into another time at 222 North Franklin Street as you view exquisite wedding gowns from the late 1900's to the present.

## TIDS, BITS, and PIECES

From the June 8, 1922

edition of the *Greensburg Daily News*

Big things were doing in Gainesville this morning when the whole suburb turned out enmasse to clean up the streets preparatory to oiling them. Women and children were out at six o'clock and assisted in the work with shovels, brooms, rakes and the like and things just fairly flew. It was hauled away by teams and some wheelbarrows and the people of that community decided to organize by electing a street commissioner. After a hot fight Steve Van Kirk was declared winner over John Idelwine and Sgt. Harbison. While there was some feeling that a Broadway man ought not to be given this place the Sergeant and John are somewhat consoled because Mr. Van Kirk has promised them that he would let them help in the next cleanup.

### Coming Events for 2009

#### Gallery Exhibits for 2009

Lincoln in Greensburg and the Civil War in Decatur County  
October - November, 2009

Barbie's 50th Birthday - a collection of the famous doll's memorabilia  
December, 2009

#### Textile Exhibit Room, 2009

Wedding Exhibit - Wedding dresses from late 1800's to 1960's  
July-October, 2009 - (Museum's Collection)

#### Museum House, 2009

Wedding Exhibit - Display of wedding dresses from many contributors  
July-October, 2009

Christmas Décor - Winter Wonderland  
November - December, 2009

Christmas Open House - December 13, 2009

#### Fifth Sunday

November 29, 2009 - The Murrays, Violin and Piano

### Do you have e-mail?

We are establishing a database of our members' e-mail accounts. If you have an account send Susan Ricke a message at [dechissoc@etczone.com](mailto:dechissoc@etczone.com) to get on our database and receive news and updates from time to time. We want to keep in touch with our members.

**Editor of the Bulletin**

George Granholt  
E-mail articles and ideas to  
Email: [gholt2\\_2@msn.com](mailto:gholt2_2@msn.com)

**Decatur County Historian & Genealogist**

Russell Wilhoit  
1024 East Lakeshore Drive  
Greensburg, IN 47240  
Email: [russell.wilhoit.1@comcast.net](mailto:russell.wilhoit.1@comcast.net)

**Tri-County Genealogist**

Irene Krieger  
23184 Pocket Road  
Batesville, IN 47006

“The Bulletin”

**Society's Officers**

President: Tom Barker  
Vice-President: Bryan Robbins  
Treasurer: Linda Volk  
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Bailey

**Board of Directors**

Roy Connor	Ginny Garvey
Lynda Smith	Mike McCoy
Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson
Polly Matlock	Tom Hunter

**Society's Agent**

William H. Robbins

**Museum Director**

Diana Springmier

**Historical Society of Decatur County Museum**

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December  
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764  
Email: [dechissoc@etczone.net](mailto:dechissoc@etczone.net)  
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Museum est. 1984  
Society est. 1957



PERMIT #80  
IN  
GREENSBURG,  
PAID  
U.S. POSTAGE  
STANDARD  
PRESORTED

Greensburg, IN 47240

P.O. Box 163

Historical Society of Decatur County



# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 14 No.4 (corrected)

Winter 2009

Greensburg, Indiana

Epigraph -

***History is the  
accounting of  
unintended  
Consequences.***

### Inside this issue:

Blessings	1
Presidents Letter	2
Museum Musings and Coming Events	3
Civil War Exhibit Monograph	4
Fifth Sunday, November 29th	5
Alert	6-7
Reuben Smalley Obituary from 1926	8
Postcards	9

### The Historical Society of Decatur County

Extends *Christmas Blessings* to:

The dedicated Museum staff who work in the archives and give tours each Tuesday and Thursday throughout the year

reed Schuster for chairing the Society's 2009 *Fifth Sunday Musicals*

The HSDC Board of Directors, meeting monthly, who use their expertise to set Museum policies, oversee activities, and volunteer their personal time to keep the Museum an active participant in Decatur County life

The Museum's forty weekend volunteers who help make it possible to open the doors April through December

The volunteers, both retired and unretired, who provide many devoted hours to keeping the Museum clean so a professional service does not need to be hired

Those who provide and tend the Museum's garden areas to create both a pleasant curbside appeal and an attractive setting for the building

The professional exhibit committee whose creative artistry encourages visitors to return to the Museum

Talented volunteer chefs who plan and prepare the Museum's luncheons, brunches, and teas

The *Bulletin*'s editor and the Society's Administrative Assistant for editing and preparing the quarterly publication

Those who contribute items for publication in the *Bulletin*

The many willing individuals and families who provide items on loan for the Museum exhibits and those who so graciously donate their cherished memorabilia for permanent safekeeping and display

There are so many willing individuals who volunteer their time and talent to help make the Decatur County Historical Society Museum a facility of which Decatur County can justifiably be proud. The Museum is a testimony to the willingness of Decatur County citizens to provide a witness to the values attainable from the past...and to offer them to the future.

## President's Letter

I recently attended an HSDC sponsored event at the library, a presentation by Bill Klene on trains in Decatur County. It was standing room only as Bill showed a video he produced re-creating the spectacle of a train passing through Greensburg. After seeing the video, I feel like I have actually been in the train yard as the trains pass through just south of Main Street near Monfort. Bill did an outstanding job in putting this program together and I encourage you to watch the DVD that will soon be available for purchase in the Museum Gift Shop.

Bill's family moved to Greensburg in 1944. His father, Fred Klene, owned Klene's Shoe Repair on North Broadway. I remember getting my own shoes repaired at Klene's back in the 1950's. The Society thanks Bill for his efforts and long hours at the computer putting this video together. But there is more to come. Bill has located many 8mm color motion-picture films taken of trains in Decatur County and nearby areas during the early 1950's. These films were shot by John Paul Taylor, a Greensburg resident who had an interest in trains. Bill has located this collection of films in Yuma, Arizona, at the home of John Paul's sister who has graciously offered to allow the Society to transfer these films to DVD so everyone can relive those years when trains dominated our country's transportation system. I have personally seen one of these rolls of film and I am very excited about what is in store for us. We will be receiving the film collection from Yuma soon after the holidays and Bill and I hope to have a presentation ready in time for the Society's Annual Dinner in April.

The Historical Society's new calendar for 2010 is now available for purchase in the Museum Gift Shop. I think it is the best calendar yet. The photos are of street scenes in Greensburg in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Thank you, Ginny Garvey and the Calendar Committee, for another excellent piece of Decatur County history. The calendars are \$10.00 each.

While in the Gift Shop, you may want to fill the missing pieces of your HSDC Christmas ornament collection. There will be no more new ornaments made and when the current inventory is gone it will be gone forever. At \$8.00 each, they make an excellent Christmas gift, as do the calendars.

As President of the Board of the Historical Society of Decatur County, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Tom Barker, President

### Membership Form

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues.

Check your address label to see if you have paid for this year. Memberships make great gifts. We are looking for new members.

## MUSEUM MUSINGS

The Decatur County Historical Society's museum annual Christmas Open House will be Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, from 1 o'clock P.M. until 4 O'clock P.M. For those who remember and wish to reminisce, there will be a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Barbie Doll Exhibit in the Gallery. Visitors, children, their parents, and grandparents will also be welcomed in both downstairs parlors, where a Winter Wonderland, planned and decorated by Ginny Garvey and reed Schuster, celebrates the season. In the North Parlor, Santa, Mrs. Claus, and one of Santa's eager elves will greet Believers of all ages. On the front porch, museum guests will be fascinated by the bright red L.S. Ayers Toyland Mailbox, collecting letters to Santa. Santa says he will answer them "in due time."

The music for the afternoon will be presented by Carolyn Cleland, harpist, Willadene Wood, pianist, Elizabeth Bailey, violinist, and music students from Melody Mart. All will be happily sharing their talents for the enjoyment of museum visitors.

For a number of years, Gladys Pike, assisted by her family, has provided the traditional museum Christmas bread pudding. The Society thanks the Pikes for ever so many servings of their delectable dessert. This year museum volunteers will be serving a variety of desserts in the dining room, along with a "Winter Wonderland Surprise," prepared by Jane Brown. "Christmas at the Museum" is a very special time. Come and celebrate it with your family and friends!

### ***Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Barbie Celebration!***

Beginning December 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, the Museum will be displaying Barbie dolls with her many friends and all kinds of accessories. On Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, Helen Hamilton and Nancy Cuskaden will be hosting a tea in Barbie's honor for little girls and their mothers or their grandmothers. The cost is only \$5.00 per person, and seating is limited. Please get your reservations in early by calling Helen at 527-2740 or Nancy at 663-7896.

### **Coming Events**

#### **Fifth Sunday**

November 29, 2009 - The Murrays, Violin and Piano

A collection of Holiday music

(see page 5)

#### **Museum House**

**Winter Wonderland - December, 2009**

**Tea with Barbie - December 12, 2009 (reservation only)**

**Christmas Open House - December 13, 2009 (free and open to the public)**

#### **Gallery Exhibits**

##### ***Barbie's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday***

A complete extraordinary collection of the famous doll's memorabilia

December

##### ***Lincoln in Greensburg and the Civil War in Decatur County***

A collection of artifacts relating to Decatur County citizens in the Civil War

January through March 2010

### Civil War Exhibit Monograph

As part of the Historical Society's exhibit on the American Civil War, your editor was assigned the task of selecting the major historical events which led to the conflict. As you know, a plethora of material is available on this subject, much of it tendentious. There was the slavery question, of course, the election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency, Manifest Destiny and its Westward Movement sidekick, the power struggle in the U.S. Congress, the flowery oratory of political egotism, states' rights, secession, and pre-war violence. Pick any assortment of books, movies, made for television, programs, Civil War biographies, general reference works, et cetera, and the same "causes" appear. There will be, of course, differences of opinion in respect to the events' treatments, but usually the same culprits are named.

Nevertheless, here is yet another list, with, perhaps, a slightly different approach. Your editor has placed examples of events in one of six categories: Geo-Economic Factors, Founding Documents of the U.S. Federal Republic, Selected Responses to the Slavery Problem, Civil Unrest, U.S. Supreme Court Decisions, and Three Presidents. There is no attempt to create a story line, and chronological order is not strictly observed. A single "most important" event or circumstance is also unnamed, but a common thread is identifiable: the ugly reality of slavery.

Your editor is aware that many have long accepted the slavery issue as the major cause of the Civil War, but because it is an obviously moral justification for the conflict, many others have looked elsewhere for "the main cause." Your editor, admittedly, has been one of the latter, perhaps based largely on Lincoln's 1<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Address and on his letter to publisher and abolitionist, Horace Greeley, stating that the abolition of slavery was not the President's main objective; rather, it was the preservation of the Union. However, the letter to Greeley should not be in consideration as a cause of the war, because it was written after a year of fighting had gone by. Consequently your editor has tweaked his position somewhat; he will accept that slavery was the "pervading cause" of the conflict.

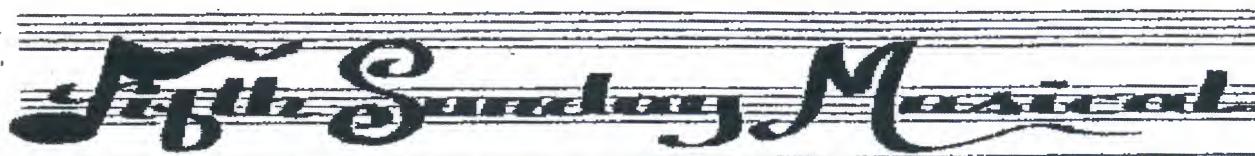
Available in the Civil War exhibit for your reading are these newly-added documents:

1. [Wikipedia](#) chronology of the Civil War
2. Lincoln's 1<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Address
3. Henry David Thoreau's "Plea for Captain John Brown" and [Wikipedia](#) commentary
4. Circumstances Considered to be Major Preludes to the American Civil War-1861-'65



## Historical Society of Decatur County

Requests the honor of your presence



2009

The Sesquicentennial Edition  
150 Years of Music

**Sunday, November 29th**

First Presbyterian Church  
202 North Franklin Street  
Greensburg, Indiana

The Murrays will add a little  
Christmas holly to begin the  
season.

**The Murrays, Mark and Michelle**

**2:30 p.m.**

Mark Murray, is a Professor of Music at Anderson University and holds a doctorate in trumpet performance from Indiana University. Along with other awards he currently plays principal Trumpet with the Anderson Symphony Orchestra. Michelle Murray received her degree from Stetson University and obtained her master's degree in music theory from Indiana University. She currently is a professor at Anderson University.

*The concert is dedicated to the memory of  
Franklin Corya and his love and support of clas-  
sical music.*

All performances will be followed by refreshments by Jane Brown and an opportunity to meet the artists.

Platinum Sponsors: Greensburg Daily News

Gold Sponsors: First Federal Savings and Loan, WTRE AM 1330

Bronze Sponsors: David and Mary Miers

Sponsors: John and Adele Corya

Co-Sponsors: Levensteins/ Abbey Carpet

Patrons: Tom and Ann Shazer, Diana Springmier, June Ann Cook

Underwriters: Optimist Club of Greensburg, Doerflinger Insurance, Lion's Club

**Make your Christmas shopping meaningful and pleasurable! Choose from these gifts available at  
the Historical Society Museum:**

**Christmas Ornaments**

**Afghans and Wall Hangings**

**Video tapes and DVD's**

**Note Paper and Post Cards**

**CD's featuring local musicians**

**Maps of Decatur County: 1882 and 1886**

**Decatur County Courthouse Puzzles**

**2010 Calendars**

## ALERT

*This article was first printed on Sept 12, 1913, Greensburg Standard, a weekly newspaper and it was edited and added to by, Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian*

*Notes, \* buried in the new Westport cemetery*

*This is the 13<sup>th</sup> in a series of articles about the small communities in Decatur County*

*Next time we will journey over to Adams Twp and visit one of the larger towns in Decatur County, and that will be St. Paul, which was founded in 1854 by Jonathan Paul, so I will see you next time, Russell*

Near twenty-five miles southwest of Greensburg, in the corner of Decatur County, is nestled the enterprising little "tri-county" hamlet of Alert – "tri-county" hamlet, because of the fact that it lies in Decatur, corner of Bartholomew and Jennings counties. The Bartholomew county line being but one-half mile to the west, while that of Jennings joins "hands" with Decatur just one and a half miles to the south. The Southern Indiana Railroad carries the people and freight in and out of town.

It has a population of about two hundred people, and is surrounded by fine, fertile and up-to-date farms and as wide-awake, thrifty, enterprising framers as can be found in the state.

### Churches

Alert has two churches – Methodist and Christian Union, both with a fair membership. Rev. Charles Click, student of Moore's Hill College, supplies the pulpit of the Methodist church every two weeks, while Rev. George F. Callon, of Ohio, fills the pulpit of the Christian once a month. Both denominations have Sunday school regularly each Sunday, and a deep interest is manifest by all – superintendents, teachers, and scholars.

### Splendid Schools

Prof. Leslie E. Moore and Miss Cordelia Rogers have charge of the schools and splendid schools they have. Prof. Moore has charge of the first and second high school departments and also grades seven and eight, while Miss Rogers has supervision of the primary and domestic science departments. There are nineteen scholars in grades seven and eight, and even forty in first and second high school departments, making a total enrollment of fifty-nine pupils – enough for two instructors. Mr. Moore hails from Nashville, Brown county, while Miss Rogers is a home product, and both are most excellent instructors and are giving entire satisfaction to both patrons and pupils.

### Business Houses

The little town has some wide-awake, hustling business men. Among them S. B. Leech, who now owns and operates a general store in the "Old Wesley Spear" brick building, in the north end of town. In Mr. Leech's store can be found everything usually carried in a first class up-to-date general store, and his goods are the very best quality; his prices are right, and he gets a liberal share of the public patronage. His business is secured from three counties, and of course is extensive – much more than a passer by would suspect. In fact his stock of goods and the quality thereof, would be a credit to a town four times the size of Alert, and he richly deserves the very liberal patronage he is receiving.

George B. Blazer is the village blacksmith, and a venerable one he is – for twenty-one long years he has hammered iron, shod horses and done a general blacksmithing business at the "same old stand." He has past the fifty-sixth mile stone in life's rugged journey, and says he can shoe a horse with as much ease and as quickly as he did twenty years ago.

The veteran harness maker, J. A. Burns, for a quarter of a century has held fourth in the one building, making harness, repairing harness and doing anything and everything in the harness line, and bids fair to continue for years to come. He enjoys a splendid trade, has made and saved money, all of which Mr. Burns richly merits.

Henry Lawrence, the merchant prince, conducts a general store, and is fully prepared to satisfy the every want of his numerous customers. His stock of goods is large, well selected, up-to-date and the kind that holds his old and brings him new customers.

The noblest of animals, the horse, as well as all other "critters" and animals have their numerous ailments and affliction carefully and successfully looked after by Dr. Raymond Banister, (1881-1949 \*) the veterinary, who has established a fine practice.

And Alert is not without an "artifice" artist – Prior Knight, weilder and master of the paint brush has made many an old building look like brand splinter new by the artistic manipulation of brush and paint. He is as good as ever handled a brush, as is attested by the constant demand for his services.

Dr. Charlie Wood ( 1880-1959\*) is the home physician and surgeon, and gives careful and close application to his business, which is on the increase, not that health is failing in this community, but on account of the fact the Doctor's territory is on the increase.

Mrs. Frank Sater is the vocal and instrumental instructor in music, and a success she is.

John C. Arnold (1857-1935\*) has been for the past twenty years and is now the dispenser of law and justice – he is the township justice of the peace, besides being as good a carpenter as ever drove a nail.

The elevator, or grain house, is operated by that prince of good fellows, Samuel Kelly, and thousands of bushels of grain are bought and shipped from here each year.

A saw mill is owned and operated by Lemuel G. Hall, and is a great benefit to the whole community.

Nor is Alert without a well-digger – he is here in the person of Emory Banister, and every man who deals with him generally has to "take water."

Edward Talkington, familiarly known as "Little Ed," is both ticket agent and manipulator of the lightning that transmits the telegrams for the Southern Indiana railroad.

There is a Masonic lodge here with a membership of eighty, and they have a well equipped lodge room. When a candidate is received in the lodge he gets the "light" in an instructive way.

Last but by no means least, is the Kelly Tavern under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kelly, and a better place to stop, satisfy the innerman and get a good night's rest, you'll not find in all Decatur county. The bread, the cakes, the pies, the fried chicken, the cream gravy, the fresh sweet mild, the sweet butter and numerous other edibles will all remind you of "what mother used to make."

### Notes by the Wayside

Jefferson Wheeldon and his sister, Miss Lou, held public sales of their household goods yesterday and among the articles sold was an old-time loom – one hundred twenty-two years old. Another relic was a cream pitcher seventy-six years old.

Otis Beesley, south of Alert, is building a three room addition to his residence.

A new four-room frame house is being erected by Milton Tremain on his farm just south of Alert.

James D. Anderson, (1880-1921\*) a well to do farmer residing one mile northeast of Alert, is erecting a handsome nine-room residence, two story, with a bath. He has just completed a new barn forty by sixty fee.

"Joe" Kelly, mayor of Alert, says his father was a poor man and could give him but one name, just plain "Joe."

For sixty-two long years Prior Knight has lived a life of "single cussedness." Never asked but one woman to marry him and she asked Prior to "excuse her." Like a durn fool he excused her.

## Reuben Smalley

*This is the 10<sup>th</sup> in a series of obits of well known men and women of Decatur County, who helped shape the city and county into what we have today, I would like to think this is a way to remember them, most who have been gone for so many years.*

*Edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, Nov 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

*Note: G.A.R. denotes Grand Army of the Republic - a veterans group popular after the Civil War*

*\*obit taken from the July 9, 1926 Greensburg, Daily News*

Civil War Hero Dies Here Today

Reuben Smalley awarded medal by Congress

Lived Here 30 Years

Funeral to be held in Baptist Church,

Monday morning at 10:30

Reuben Smalley, 87, noted Civil War veteran, passed away at 6:30 this morning (\*July 9, 1926) at his home at 514 North Carver street after an illness of over two years. Mr. Smalley was able to be up about his home until yesterday. His death was not unexpected.



Mr. Smalley was voted a medal by Congress for bravery at the siege of Vicksburg on May 22, 1863.

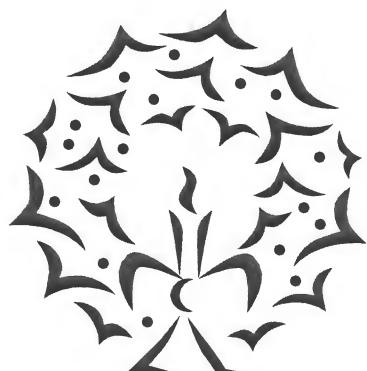
He was born in Steuben country, New York, April 29, 1839, and enlisted in Co. F. 83<sup>rd</sup> Indiana regiment at Lawrenceburg Aug. 15, 1862.

During the siege of Vicksburg which lasted from May 19 to July 1, 1863. Gen. Grant called for a volunteer storming party on May 22 and Smalley and two others of his company responded. Out of 105 men only 28 came back to tell the tale of their bravery. He was one of the lucky boys in blue that day.

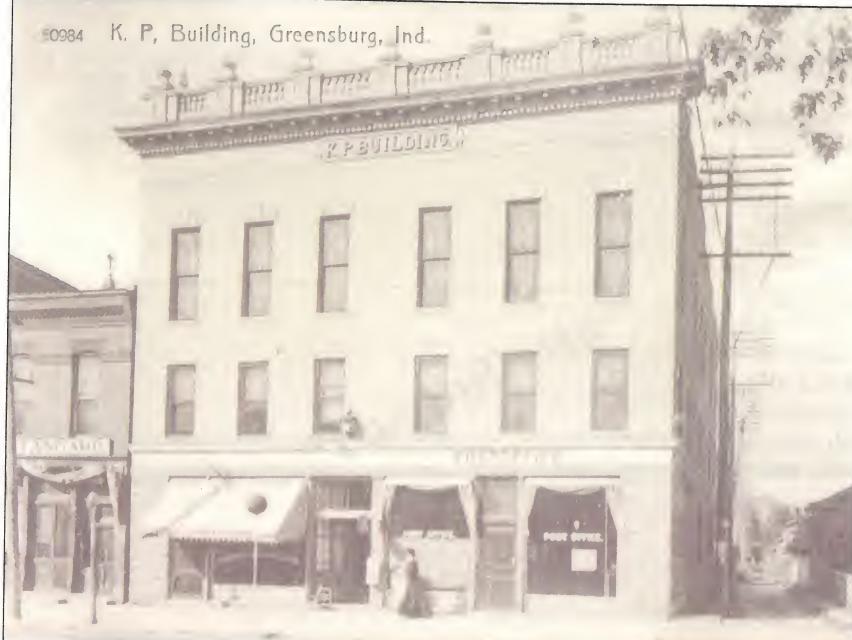
Mr. Smalley became a resident of Greensburg about 30 years ago and was one of its honored citizens. His wife, who was Nancy Johnson when they were married July 23, 1859, lived together for about 64 years. She died four years ago, Mr. Smalley was twice elected constable here and served the city well.

The funeral will be held Monday morning at 10:30 o'clock in the Baptist church, the Rev. J. Hubbard Morton officiating. The burial will be in South Park in charge of the G.A.R. of which he was an honored member.

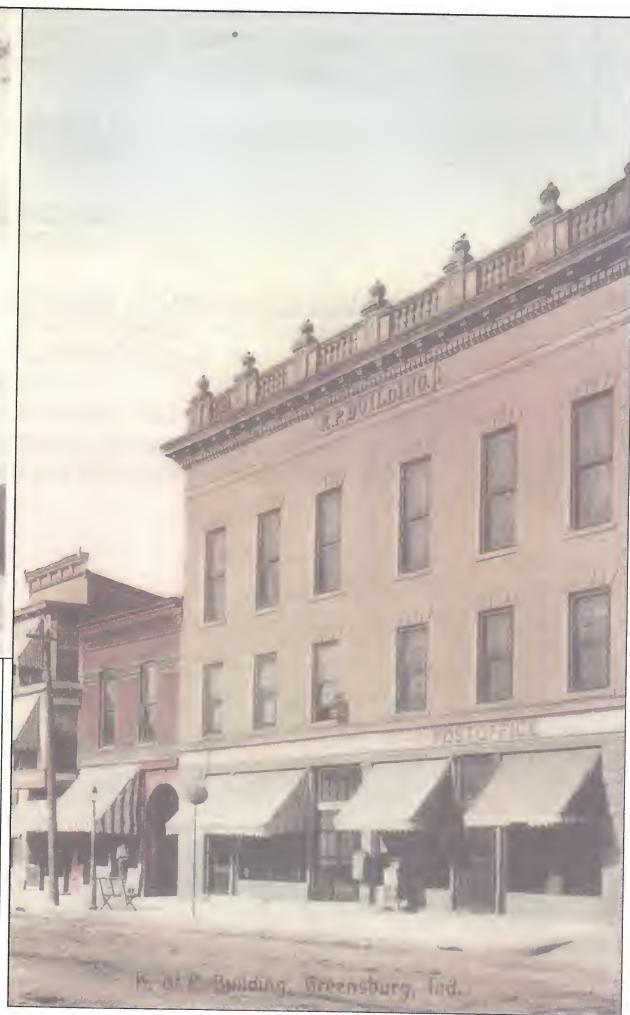
*Note: Rueben Smalley is one of five Civil War Medal of Honor recipients from Decatur County*



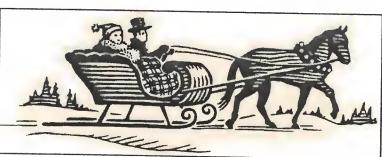
This is the 5<sup>th</sup> in a series of postcards from my collection, this month I am featuring the old KP building since it is being restored, I have taken two different scenes from around 1908 showing the store front the way it used to be, as you can tell it was the post office at one time, if you look to the left, is where the old KP theater was located and also a undertakers office was 2 doors down from the old post office for many years. Also as you can see the Greensburg Standard Weekly newspaper was located next door in one of the photos, before it became a movie house.



This is the front of a turn of the century (1900) postcard. We have taken six of these postcards and made note cards which are very nice for this time of year. (Notecards are in color—Only \$2.00) right



As you pass by the Museum in December, don't miss the sleigh in front which will be used for photo opportunities at our Annual Christmas Open House. This sleigh is out of storage and on display for the first time in several years.



### Historical Society is part of the Modern Age

We have been very successful in corresponding with our members via e-mail. If you have an e-mail account, simply send a message to [dechissoc@etczone.com](mailto:dechissoc@etczone.com) to be added to the database and receive news and updates. We want to keep in touch with our members.

The Historical Society also has a new page on Facebook. Search for Historical Decatur to become a friend of the Historical Society and to keep up with events at the museum.

For those of you who do not communicate via computer, you can always reach a real person on Tuesdays and Thursdays by calling or stopping in. **You are always welcome. We value communication with our members in any form.**

Editor of the Bulletin

George Granholt  
E-mail articles and ideas to  
Email: [gholt2\\_2@msn.com](mailto:gholt2_2@msn.com)

Decatur County Historian & Genealogist

Russell Wilhoit  
1024 East Lakeshore Drive  
Greensburg, IN 47240  
Email: [russell.wilhoit.1@comcast.net](mailto:russell.wilhoit.1@comcast.net)

Tri-County Genealogist

Irene Krieger  
23184 Pocket Road  
Batesville, IN 47006

“The Bulletin”

Society's Officers

President: Tom Barker  
Vice-President: Bryan Robbins  
Treasurer: Linda Volk  
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Bailey

Board of Directors

Roy Connor	Ginny Garvey
Lynda Smith	Mike McCoy
Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson
Polly Matlock	Tom Hunter

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

Diana Springmier

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December  
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764  
Email: [dechissoc@etczone.net](mailto:dechissoc@etczone.net)  
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Christmas Open House December 13th  
Tea with Babie December 12th  
Fifth Sunday Presentation November 29th

Museum est. 1984  
Society est. 1957



PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
GREENSBURG,  
IN  
PERMIT #80

Greensburg, IN 47240

P.O. Box 163

Historical Society of Decatur County